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RACHAPONG KHIEWPAN

Rangsit University, Thailand

THE ELEMENTS OF EVENT SPORTS TOURISM MANAGEMENT OF FOOTBALL CLUBS IN THAI PREMIER LEAGUE

Abstract:

Many Thai association football clubs in Thai Premier League have become sports tourism attractions to captivate sports tourists' attention to visit. However, some football clubs have still not reached an achievement. Thus, this study aims to investigate the goals and the elements of sports event tourism management of the football clubs in Thai Premier League so as to enhance the effectiveness of sports event tourism management which could lead to an economic drive, revenue distribution to local communities, and eventually the creative economic development as stated in the National Tourism Development Plan 2012-2016 of Ministry of Tourism and Sports. The methodology used in this study was a qualitative case study with the association football clubs competing in Thai Premier League and the unit of analysis was sports event tourism management.

The results revealed that the goals of organizing sports events should be to create physical motives, interpersonal motives, and cultural motives. Such sports events were arranged by considering nonresidential tourists' curiosity to experience new environment and factors affecting tourist decision making. The elements of sports event management were administration, design, marketing, operation, and risks. The operational methods were carried out under the conceptual frameworks of sports management, tourism management, and event management with the aim to achieve the goals of sports event tourism management.

Keywords:

Elements of Management, Sports Tourism Events, Thai Premier League

JEL Classification: M10

Introduction

Sports tourism was defined as the combination of the world's greatest social phenomenon and the world's largest industry. Some evidences proved that there have been people who travel to observe or participate in sports competition events for centuries. As far as we know, it was the ancient Olympic Games dating back to 776 B.C. Since then, sporting activities have been involved with travel business with a growth of up to billion dollars and has become one of the greatest and fastest growing modern service industries. Later, it was stated that sports tourism can be divided into 3 categories; namely, Active Sports tourism, Nostalgia Sports Tourism, and Event Sports Tourism.

Travelling to join sports events among Thais has an increasing growth rate, especially with the current trend of Thai Premier League football competition events. This can generate a great number of travelers, called Sports Event Travelers, including athletes, staff, accompanying persons, fans, and spectators who intend to participate or observe sports events as well as to travel within the area. Therefore, if effective sports tourism management is established, it will create an economic drive and revenue distribution to the local communities where sports events are held.

A crucial problem of organizing Thai Premier League football competition events is that some tourists decide not to visit the sport venues in which football competitions are held due to avoidance of crowds and discomfort or uncertainty about safety and security whether the events can run in an orderly manner. All are resulted from inefficient management which is a main cause of a slowdown in the tourist number.

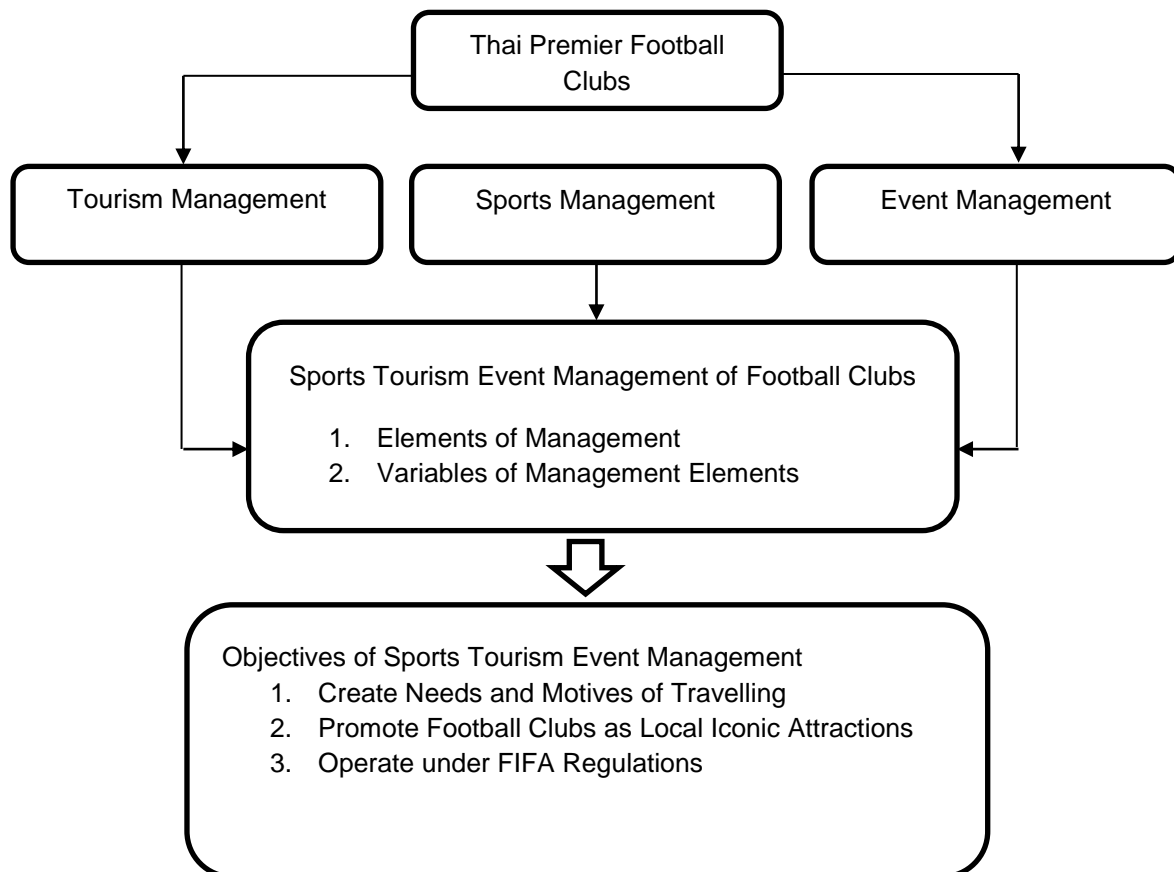
From the abovementioned phenomenon, the researcher then became interested in investigating objectives and elements of organizing sports tourism management of football clubs in Thai Premier League. The findings will be implemented to construct and enhance sports tourism management patterns so as to achieve managerial efficacy and standardize Thai football clubs' sports tourism management to be close to international standards. Additionally, Thailand's sports tourism will be promoted as a whole.

Research Objectives

1. To investigate variables of sports tourism management elements of football clubs in Thai Premier League
2. To study elements of sports tourism management of football clubs in Thai Premier League

Research Methodology

The methodology used in this study was a qualitative research with non-experimental designs. The association football clubs competing in Thai Premier League were case studied in the form of organization survey. The unit of analysis was tourism, sports, and events. The conceptual framework is presented as follows.



Research Procedure

To study the elements of sports tourism management of football clubs, the procedure is as follows.

1. Documentary research was carried out in order to study and gather related literature including FIFA rules and regulations, objectives, and elements of sports tourism management, and content analysis was used.
2. To investigate objectives and elements of sports tourism management, structured interactive interview was constructed and carried out with 18 respondents from 3 groups: tourism academicians, executives or owners of successful football clubs, and administrators of Ministry of Tourism and Sports; those with knowledge of and were

relevant to sports tourism. The data obtained were analyzed through typological analysis at a micro level. Domain analysis was also used to group sub-variables under the same element.

3. The data obtained from document analysis and interview were further studied through the use of analytic induction to systematically develop explanations for variables of elements of sports tourism event management of Thai football clubs.

Research Findings

After the results were gained by analyzing keywords in order to systematically categorize management elements into the same groups according to Bryman, Stephens, and Campo, the variables of elements and elements of sports tourism management of Thai football clubs are shown below.

Figure 1 Interview Data Analysis by Keyword Grouping

Variables of Elements	Relationship	Keywords (Elements)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To generate demands for travelling by using football competition events to attract or motivate people to visit football clubs which are event venues 2. To build up success in organizing sports tourism events which is the goal of the city or province where a football club is located in 3. To promote football clubs as city's or province's iconic attractions 4. To popularize provinces, cities, or venues as tourist attractions by using football competition events as a tool 5. To manage existing resources properly 6. To operate in accordance with FIFA Regulations 	Partial	Objectives of sports tourism management of Thai football clubs
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Practical and clear policies were set by football club executives so as to seriously promote sports event tourism 2. Personnel were allocated for football clubs' sports event tourism. 3. Sports event tourism management was standardized. 4. Planning and budgeting each sports tourism event. 	Partial	Elements of sports tourism management in the aspect of administration

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Designating proper strategies to internationalize sports tourism of football clubs. 6. Financial allocation for organizing sports tourism events. 7. Seeking sponsors for organizing sports tourism events. 8. Operation was directed, controlled, supervised, and appraised. 9. Business ventures were managed properly. 10. Dealing with fans and sponsorship. 11. Operating in accordance with government supports. 12. Building up cooperation with other football clubs 13. Finding alliance partners for handling with sports event tourism 14. Promoting and supporting all relevant stakeholders for organizing football clubs' sports competition events. 15. Boosting up participation of all relevant stakeholders for organizing football clubs' sports competition events. 16. Enhancing cooperation with public authorities with expertise and relevance to sports event tourism 17. Developing cooperation with tourism business 18. Focusing on connectivity of the activities organized 19. Supply chain management was implemented properly. 		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tourists' services were designed. 2. Creating electric atmosphere inside stadiums. 3. Providing further interesting activities during sports events apart from watching football games. 4. Creating football clubs' historical narration related to football competitions. 5. Aiming to build up visitors' experiences while designing. 6. Focusing on football clubs' distinctiveness while designing. 	<p>Partial</p>	<p>Elements of sports tourism management in the aspect of design</p>

7. Designing tourists' traveling programs which were relevant to and suitable for watching football competitions.		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Branding football clubs. 2. Making football clubs to become local brands. 3. Finding ticket distributors or package tours. 4. Create the values of sports event tourism among tourists and sports enthusiasts. 5. Promoting the areas surrounding the venue to be tourist spots. 6. Selling football clubs' souvenirs and tournament tickets through distribution channels. 	Partial	Elements of sports tourism management in the aspect of marketing
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Providing tourist transportation. 2. Arranging venue preventative maintenance. 3. Researching tourists' desires. 4. Establishing information systems for use in decision making. 5. Collaborating with tourism supporting organizations. 6. Creating work motivation. 7. Transferring knowledge to the community around the venue. 8. Preparing information for tourists. 9. Preparing guidebooks to publicize football clubs' news. 10. Bolstering personnel's core competencies for organizing sports tourism events. 11. Making an inventory necessary for organizing events. 12. Checking readiness in facilities. 13. Assessing resource potential within the area. 14. Communicating within organizations. 15. Designing tourist privileges. 16. Setting up the tourism distribution system at the football club. 17. Seeking sponsors for organizing events. 	Partial	Elements of sports tourism management in the aspect of operations

18. Recruiting and training security guards.		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Constructing security systems. 2. Giving knowledge and raising tourists' awareness on sports event tourism. 3. Establishing risk management process to deal with risks arising from operational errors. 4. Designating safety measures and warning systems. 5. Having best practices in decision making when unexpected events happen. 	Partial	Elements of sports tourism management in the aspect of risks

Discussion and Conclusion

Regarding the data obtained from document analysis, interview, and observation under the conceptual framework related to tourism management, sports management, and event management, the discussion is as follows.

The goal of Thai football clubs for organizing sports event tourism is to build up travelling demands. They use football competitions and famous local tourist attractions to attract people to visit the site where events take place. Existing resources are utilized properly in accordance with FIFA regulations.

This is relevant to Shonk (2008), Karlis (2003), Getz (2005), Gibson (1998), and Young (2013) who stated that the goal of event tourism management is to create travelling desires by using physical motives derived from suitably creating and developing influential factors of travel decision making.

The elements of sports event tourism management of Thai football clubs are presented as follows.

Element 1: Sports tourism management in the aspect of administration

This refers to the tasks related to determining policies, guidelines, or plans in various aspects, e.g. finance, human resources, purchasing, time, management systems, information, performance control and evaluation, etc., with an aim to drive sports event tourism management to accomplish the goal.

This is supported by Getz (2005), Karlis (2003), Mitchell. (1997), Young (2013) and Uapipattanakul (2012) who explained that sports tourism management in the aspect of

administration includes policy making, planning, elements and resources, time, finance, control and measures, and activity setting.

Element 2: Sports tourism management in the aspect of design

This refers to the tasks in relation to designing events and activities occurring during sports tourism. Creativity plays a vital role to create patterns, methods, contents, or stories, primarily aiming to create interesting and unforgettable experiences for tourists and to motivate them to visit the destination where sports tourism events are organized. The designing tasks include designing tourist services, activities during events, and information conveyed to tourists.

This is relevant to Getz (2005), Toohey et al (2002), Ottevanger (2007), Arora and Shaw (2002), Young (2013), Gibson (1998), Steven (2008), and Taesilapasatit (2012) who stated that that sports tourism management in the aspect of design consists of designing events, histories, services, identities, available packages, contents, and themes.

Element 3: Sports tourism management in the aspect of marketing

This means the tasks regarding marketing planning, branding tourism attractions, conducting promotion through marketing communication with tourists. For example, public relations and advertisement through media in order to build destination image, to investigate changes in sports tourist behaviors for properly adjusting marketing strategies, or to seek new tourist groups by stimulating travel desires and motivating them to visit the places where sports tourism events are organized.

This is in accordance with Getz (2005), Toohey et al (2002), Ottevanger (2007), Arora and Shaw (2002), Young (2013), Gibson (1998), Steven (2008), and Taesilapasatit (2012) who asserted that sports tourism management in the aspect of marketing is composed of conducting place promotion, destination image, public relations, and merchandise management.

Element 4: Sports tourism management in the aspect of operation

This is defined as the tasks undertaken before, while, and after organizing sports tourism events. The example tasks are organizing competitions, providing tourists with useful and practical travel information, constructing essential infrastructure and facilities, managing logistics, and establishing tourist transportation systems. All tasks aim to maximize readiness in welcoming tourists.

Shonk (2008), Getz (2005), Toohey et al (2002), Ottevanger (2007), Arora and Shaw (2002), Young (2013), Gibson (1998), Supanikorn (2008), Hongsasaenyatham (2009), Uapipattanakul (2012), and Homchuen (2013) can support the above idea. They mentioned that sports tourism management in the aspect of operation deals with managing logistics, infrastructure and participants, coordinating with tourism service providers, developing local communities, and coping with social impacts.

Element 5: Sports tourism management in the aspect of risks

The last element involves the tasks concerning readiness in coping with unexpected situations by investigating causes of damage, constructing process, identifying working instructions and preventive measures to diminish risky situations which could negatively affect the future of sports tourism events. Controlling and monitoring should be carried out systematically to be ready for any possible negatively affecting events.

This is consistent with Shonk (2008), Getz (2005), Young (2013), Gibson (1998), and Allen (2008) who described that sports tourism management in the aspect of risks includes emergency management, security, regulations setting, and knowledge giving so as to raise tourists' awareness on sports event tourism.

All five elements of sports event tourism management are relevant to D. Getz's work (2005) proposing patterns of event management and event tourism and Guy Masterman's work (2014) presenting strategic sports event management. All aim to increase operational effectiveness to achieve designated goals.

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